



*Julie Bouchet-Horwitz, FNP-BC, IBCLC
Hudson Valley Breastfeeding, LLC
9 Hudson Road East
Irvington, New York 10533
914.231.5065 · 914.407.1718 fax
www.hudsonvalleybreastfeeding.com
jbouchet@hudsonvalleybreastfeeding.com*

How to Wake a Sleepy Baby

Wait for signs of light sleep to wake a baby

- Babies spend 50% of their time in light sleep
- Keep baby close to observe for signs of light sleep and stirring
- Stirring is the FIRST indication of hunger. Then babies begin to root and look for the breast. Then they begin to cry.

Signs of Light Sleep

- REM sleep
- Movement of arms and legs or stirring
- Mouthing or sucking movements

Remove clothes either partial or down to diaper. Unless he/she feeds on 4 sides. (See below).

Hold the breast in a C or U hold and build up the pressure in the breast by gently squeezing the breast far away from the nipple. You should notice the baby begin to actively suck. Continue the compressing the breast while the baby is sucking and swallowing. When the baby stops, wait about 10-15 seconds to see if she begins again. If she does not begin swallowing, then release the breast. This allows milk to flow from the areas that your hand was blocking. Let the baby continue to swallow. When she stops again, wait 15 seconds to see if it is a natural pause. If she does not begin again, then do Breast Compression again. You continue Breast Compression and Release during the feeding to increase the milk supply and/or keep a sleepy baby actively nursing.

In non-nutritive sucking just the lips move. This is also called “flutter nursing”.

In nutritive sucking a facial muscle moves near the ear or temple. The tongue and lower jaw is connected to this muscle and when baby is actively nursing it moves. Listen also for swallowing.

Summary:

- Breast Compression – baby begins to swallow. Hold until baby pauses more than 15 seconds.
- Breast Release – baby starts swallowing again after the pause
- Breast Compression – baby begins to swallow again

- Continue compression and release throughout the feeding until baby stops nutritive sucking. *Listen for swallowing.*
- Take his clothes off if necessary
- Rub your nails on his feet or back to get him to suck

No need to do anything if baby is drinking, pauses, and then swallows again.

Side 1: Wake the baby for the first side and nurse with clothes on if he/she is nurses.

Side 2: remove clothes to wake him for the 2nd side.

Side 3: Change the diaper for the 3rd side

Side 4: Clothe him again for the 4th side. You are doing this to keep him actively swallowing.

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